

LIVING NATURALLY

a community newsletter

Join Us!
Community Dinner
May 16, 5 - 7 PM
\$4 Burrito Bowl, Live
Music and Fun!



**COMMUNITY
DINNER**

**EXTRA MEMBER
DISCOUNT FOR
A DAY**

**SPRING &
BREAKFAST
RECIPES**



Valley NATURAL
FOODS™

SPRING 2024



LIVING NATURALLY SPRING 2024

Nick Seeberger
CEO

Ashley Greywitt
Marketing Brand Manager

Susie Hessburg
Communications Specialist

Brienna Schleusner
Community Relations &
Marketing Specialist

Store Hours
8 a.m. – 9 p.m. Daily

Drive-Thru Window Hours
7 a.m. – 7 p.m. Daily

UPCOMING CO-OP EVENTS AND CLASSES

- APR. 25
IN-PERSON
MEMBER-OWNER EXCLUSIVE ● Spring Social
for Co-op Investors
- APR. 25
VIRTUAL ● Decluttering
with Kira Vanderlan
- APR. 26
IN-PERSON ● Kombucha Brewing 101
with Michelle Jaeger
- APR. 27
EVENT ● Seedlings Sustain-a-thon
Kids Event
- MAY. 1
VIRTUAL ● Tree Disease Diagnosis
with Ethan Breckner
- MAY. 6
VIRTUAL ● Low Waste Lifestyle
with Michele Tyburg
- MAY 8
IN-PERSON ● Blooming Bouquets Kids Class
with Jackie Mart
- MAY 16
EVENT ● Community Dinner

Scan QR Code for event details or visit
www.valleynaturalfoods.com/events-classes



Valley Natural Foods Co-op works in partnership with the South Metro community to support health and well-being through education and expertise in local, sustainable food and wellness services. — Valley Natural Foods Mission Statement

CEO UPDATE Nick Seeberger

There is so much happening at the co-op it is hard to know where to start! Valley Natural Foods is my family's go-to place for all of our growing season plants. Featuring the highest quality pollinator safe plants available, we fill our raised beds with herbs and vegetables and our decorative gardens and window beds with a beautiful assortment of flowers and grasses. We start the season off with some amazing hanging plants that are sure to bring a touch of spring to your yard! The Garden Center opens on May 6.

On Earth Day, April 22, we want to show our member-owners extra appreciation for being part of our co-op family. That's why we're offering you 5% off your entire purchase when you bring your own reusable bags to the co-op that day. This is our way of saying thank you for helping us reduce our environmental impact and save resources. Don't miss this opportunity to save money and the planet with your co-op!

Did you know that you can recycle more than just paper and cans at your co-op? We also accept a variety of plastic items that are not accepted by most curbside recycling programs, such as plastic bags, film, wrap, and bubble wrap. These items can be dropped off at our designated plastic bag recycle bin near the co-op's exit door. We also have donation boxes for eyeglasses and old cell phones, which we send to local charities that reuse or refurbish them. By recycling these items at your co-op, you can help divert them from landfills and give them a new life. Please make sure that the items are clean and dry before you bring them to the co-op. For a full list of accepted items, check out page 7 in this issue.



One of the best things about being part of a co-op is the sense of community and connection that we share. That's why we invite you to join us for our Spring Community Dinner, where you can enjoy a delicious meal, meet new friends, and have fun. Our next community dinner will take place on Thursday, May 16, 5-7 p.m. here at the co-op. The menu will feature a \$4 burrito bowl with your choice of meat or vegetarian filling, rice, beans, cheese, salsa, and sour cream. You can also enjoy live music by Batume, a local band, and enter a raffle to win a co-op gift basket. No reservation is required, just show up and enjoy. I hope to see you there or at any of our other upcoming events and happenings!

LETTER from the board



Lindsey Radle
VNF Board Member

Happy spring everyone!

I am thrilled to be part of the VNF board this year as a newbie and can feel the energy of the group and all the greatness to come. Similar to a seasonal change! With such a strange winter, I'm sure many of us had reflections and deep thoughts about the potential impacts for our local farmers and VNF. And while it may seem strange, I think there's also a message we can take from this in how we think about sustainability and our future. More and more folks want to know where their food comes from, how it was raised, how it was packaged, shipped, etc. Knowing that Valley is committed to doing so makes it so much more valuable beyond the products and services it provides.

Supporting local farmers has such a tremendous impact for the entire community. While we know this can't always be the case, each of us can do our part whether it be big or small. As we continue to educate one another and have the conversations, this opens up so many more possibilities to uphold sustainability within our food system. I learned about this at a young age as I was fortunate to grow up on a farm and have my grandparents down the road. I may or may not have sneaked into their garden on multiple occasions to consume loads of green beans, tomatoes, and any other food! I thought I was some kind of vegetable raiding rebel. Nope, they saw me. Now I find myself being an advocate for sustainability in all ways and wanting to share that passion with other adults, kids, and communities. My daughter asks about things that can get recycled, if things can be composted, where do certain products in stores come from, and much more. We recently started looking into vermicomposting! What is one thing you'd like to try to be more sustainable this spring? Share your knowledge or curiosities to inspire or learn with others! Thanks for your support Valley Natural Foods community!

Have an idea or questions for the VNF Board? Send us an email at board@valleynaturalfoods.com

COMMUNITY IMPACT

REGISTER ROUND-UP: A LOOK BACK AT SHOPPER CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS QUARTER

January
\$2,169



CAP Agency provides the resources, connections and support to empower people in our community to overcome social and economic barriers to self-sufficiency, and to lead healthy, connected lives with gainful employment, stable housing, and quality education.

February
\$2,006

**SHARING
OUR ROOTS**

Sharing Our Roots is a nonprofit in Northfield providing young and immigrant farmers with a safe place to farm and grow their agriculture businesses. This year, they are working with 20 farmers, many of whom are from Kenya and Mexico.

March
\$2,214



**A FRESH APPROACH
TO ENDING LOCAL HUNGER**

The Open Door is a hunger relief organization dedicated to ending local hunger through access to healthy food. As the largest food shelf in Dakota County, The Open Door serves roughly 14,000 Dakota County residents each month through a combination of innovative programs.

IT'S EASY TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR MONTHLY REGISTER ROUND-UP RECIPIENTS!

At the registers, shoppers have the opportunity to round-up their grocery bill to to the next dollar (or any amount they choose).

Shoppers who bring in reusable bags for packing up their groceries have the option to redeem or donate the 10¢ rebate earned per reusable bag.

If using self-checkout, you can round up at the end of your purchase by hitting "checkout" and then the blue "Charity Round Up" button.

Food Shelf Donations 1,363 lbs.

Food donations were collected throughout the months of January, February and March for The Open Door Pantry

THANK YOU MEMBER-OWNERS AND SHOPPERS, FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND GENEROSITY!

JOIN US
on
May 16
5-7 PM



CO-OP SUSTAINABILITY

**FREE
KIDS
EVENT!**

Seedlings Sustain-a-thon

Saturday, April 27 | 10a.m. - noon
Valley Natural Foods Patio

Join Valley Natural Foods as we partner with Midwest Food Connection and Echo Park Elementary School.

On Saturday, April 27 from 10 am - noon, (weather permitting) bring your kiddos to learn about eating sustainably with the seasons, sample in-season fruits and veggies, and make seed balls to take home to plant!

This event is weather permitting and will be cancelled if it cannot be held outdoors. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.



GREEN TEAM

Keep up to date on all the green-goodness our Valley Natural Foods Green Team has been doing to help the co-op stick to their value of community by brainstorming sustainable opportunities.

Scan to visit the Green Team's web page!



EXTRA MEMBER DISCOUNT FOR A DAY!

Member-Owners who bring in reusable bags on Earth Day — Monday, April 22 — will receive 5% off their grocery bill!

In an effort to build a more sustainable community, we hope this encourages sustainable habits, and want to thank those who go the extra mile by remembering their own reusable grocery bags.

Recycle at your Co-op!



Plastic Recycling

Merrick, Inc. not only recycles your materials brought in, they provide jobs to adults with disabilities. They work with their clients to provide enrichment to their lives through opportunities and meaningful work.

Bring your materials in (from the accepted list below) to be reconstructed into outdoor furniture!

ACCEPTED MATERIALS:

- Bread bags
- Carpet overwrap
- Case overwrap
- Cereal/pasta bags
- Dry cleaning bags
- Furniture foam wrap
- Garbage bags/liners
- Grocery/retail bags
- Heat sheets
- Ice bags
- Mattress bags
- Newspaper sleeves
- Non-paper bubble mailers/ other plastic mailers
- Packaging air pillows
- Pallet wrap/stretch film
- Produce bags
- Product wrap
- Salt bags
- Toilet paper/paper towel/ water bottle wrapping
- Wood pellet bags
- Ziploc/other resealable food storage bags

UNACCEPTED MATERIALS:

- Adhesives
- Aluminum/metallic-lined packaging (e.g. chip bags/candy wrappers)
- Biodegradable/compostable bags
- Bubble wrap
- Film packaging
- Freight/shipping air sacs
- Frozen food bags
- Hard plastic (e.g. water bottles)
- Material containing nylon (has grid-like appearance e.g. pet food bags)
- Metal
- Organic material (e.g. paper/cardboard)
- Pallet strapping
- Pre-washed salad mix bags
- Rubber
- Six-pack rings
- Sticker backing
- Wet material



**RECYCLE YOUR OLD CELLPHONES AND EYEGLASSES!
(NEAR OUR COMMUNITY BOARD)**

Yes, peas!

Mint Pesto Pea Soup

Serves 6. Total time: 30 minutes

Soup

1 tablespoon olive oil
2 tablespoons butter
1 cup yellow onion, diced
1 clove garlic, minced
4 cups vegetable broth
6 cups fresh or frozen peas
2 green onions, diced
2 tablespoons fresh mint, minced
1/4 cup sour cream

Pesto

1/2 cup fresh parsley leaves
1/4 cup fresh mint leaves
1 clove garlic, minced
1/4 cup pine nuts
1 lemon, zest and juice
2 ounces Parmesan cheese, shredded
2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and black pepper to taste

1. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil with the butter in a large stock pot over medium-high heat. Add the onions and saute 5 to 10 minutes until onions are soft and translucent. Add half the minced garlic, and cook another minute, then add the vegetable broth and bring to a boil. Add the peas, return to a boil, and simmer for 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from heat, then stir in the green onions, mint, sour cream, and a pinch of salt and pepper. Puree the soup in a blender until smooth. Be careful — vent the blender to allow steam to escape or use an immersion blender. Taste for salt and pepper.
2. To make the pesto, put the parsley, mint, garlic, pine nuts and lemon zest and juice in a food processor and blend until smooth. Add the Parmesan cheese and blend. Slowly drizzle in the olive oil until blended well. Top each bowl of soup with a large spoonful of pesto, and serve warm or chilled.



Snow Peas

Snow peas are perhaps most popular as an ingredient in stir-fried dishes. The tender, flat pods are harvested while still young, before the peas inside fully develop. Snow peas may be eaten raw or cooked — slice them into salads or try a quick saute in olive oil with minced garlic, salt, pepper and a squeeze of fresh lemon.



Snap Peas

Gardeners know it's hard to resist eating freshly picked snap peas! Crisp and sweet, snap peas (or sugar snap peas) are a cross between snow peas and shell peas. Their edible, rounded pods are crunchy and the peas are larger than those found inside snow peas. Enjoy them dipped in hummus or tzatziki, a yogurt sauce flavored with cucumbers and mint.



Shell Peas

The frozen and canned peas found in grocery stores are shell peas, also known as garden peas, English peas or sweet peas. Whereas snow peas and snap peas can Mint Pesto Pea Soup be eaten pods and all, this variety has a tougher outer shell — open it to reveal and remove the sweet peas inside, then discard the pod.





Chicken and Pea Salad

Serves 4. Total time: 40 minutes; 15 minutes active

- ½ pound snap peas
- 3 cups cooked chicken, roughly chopped
- ½ cup frozen peas, thawed
- 2 scallions, chopped
- ¼ cup parsley, chopped
- ½ cup Greek yogurt, nonfat
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 teaspoons fresh lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon dried tarragon
- Salt to taste

1. Trim the snap peas, chop into ½-inch pieces and place in a bowl with the chicken. Add the thawed peas, scallions and parsley.
2. In a cup, stir the yogurt, olive oil, lemon zest and tarragon. Pour over the chicken mixture and stir to mix.



Honey Teriyaki Chicken Stir-Fry

Serves 2. Total time: 40 minutes

- 1 large boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 2 large carrots, halved and sliced on a diagonal
- 2 cups snow peas, fresh or frozen, stems removed
- ⅓ cup teriyaki sauce
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- Red pepper flakes, optional

1. Slice the chicken breast across the grain in thin slices, then cut them into ¾ inch strips. Set aside.
2. Prep the vegetables and reserve. In a cup, mix the teriyaki sauce and honey.
3. Place a large wok or skillet over high heat for a minute, until the pan is very hot. Add the oil and swirl to coat the pan, then add the chicken. If using red pepper flakes, add a generous pinch now. Stir frequently for about 3 minutes, until the chicken is no longer pink and has some browned spots.
4. Add the carrots and snow peas and keep stirring for about 1 minute. When the chicken is cooked through and the vegetables are crisp-tender, stir the teriyaki sauce mixture again and pour it over the chicken and vegetables. Stir to coat and thicken the sauce for 1-2 minutes, and serve hot.

Snow peas and carrots add color and crunch to this simple stir-fry. Serve over rice or stir in cooked udon noodles, coating them with the teriyaki sauce.



Carrot-Pea Fritters

Serves 3. Total time: 30 minutes

Raita

- 1 cup plain yogurt
- 1 tablespoon honey or agave
- ¼ cup fresh mint, chopped
- 2 large scallions, chopped
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon ground black pepper

Fritters

- 3 cups finely shredded carrots
- 1 cup frozen peas, thawed
- ½ cup finely chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- 1 cup chickpea flour
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

1. For the raita, place the yogurt in a medium bowl and stir in the honey or agave, mint, scallions, salt and pepper. Refrigerate.
2. Heat the oven to 200°F and line a large, heat-safe plate with a double layer of paper towels. In a large bowl, combine the carrots, peas, onion

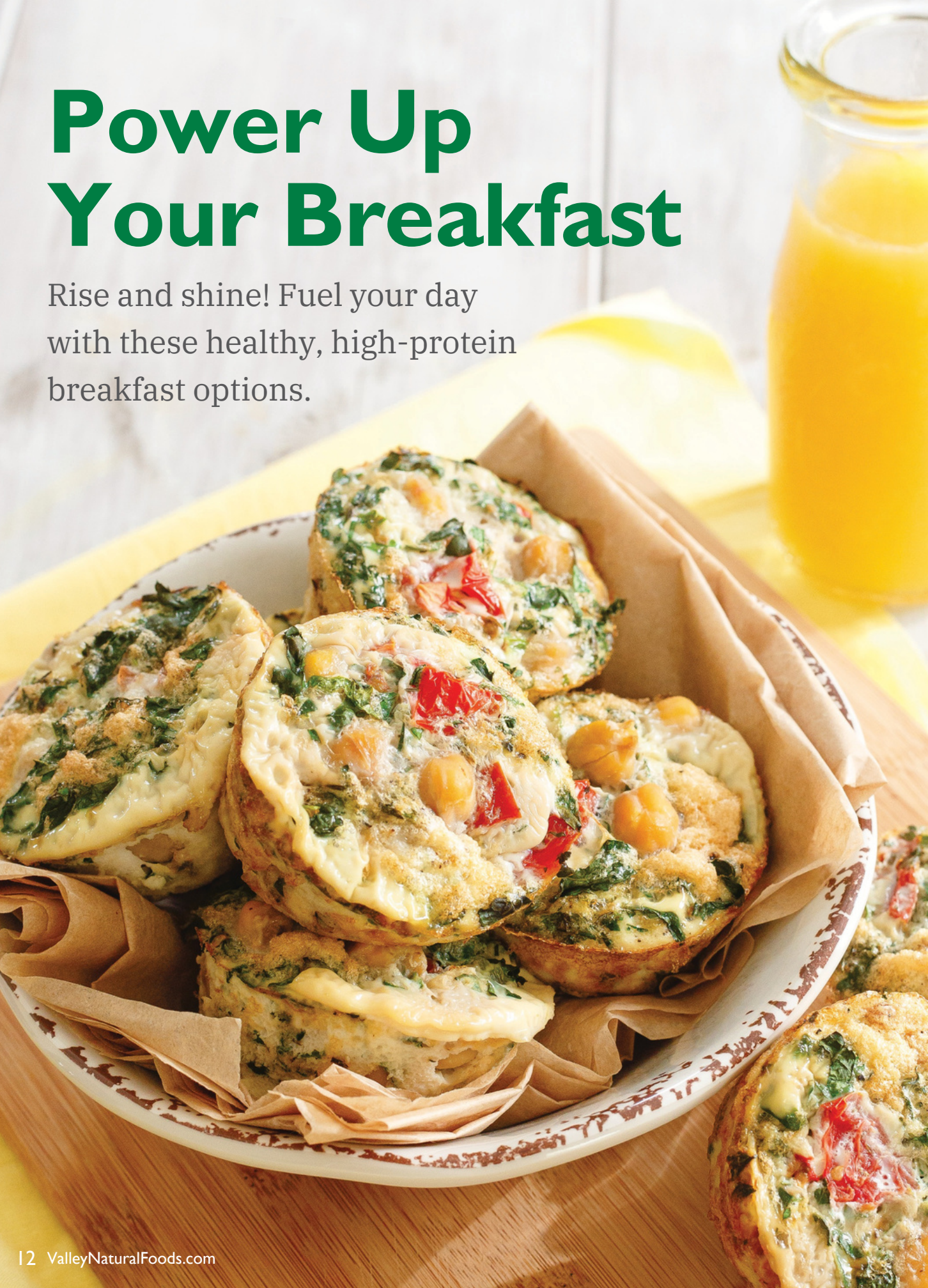
and ginger and toss to mix. In a small bowl, combine the chickpea flour, turmeric, cumin, cayenne and salt. Stir to mix, then stir into the carrot mixture, mixing until a thick dough forms. Use a quarter-cup measuring cup to scoop the carrot mixture and flatten each portion to a half-inch thick patty.

3. Place a large skillet over medium-high heat for about a minute, then drizzle in the oil, tilting the pan to cover the bottom. Place several portions of the carrot-pea mixture in the pan, leaving an inch of space between them. As they start to sizzle, reduce the heat to medium-low. Cook for about 2 minutes, and use a thin metal spatula to carefully turn the fritters. Cook for 2 minutes on the second side, then turn and cook on the first side again for 2 minutes more, until the fritters are quite brown and crisp on the outside. Place on the prepared plate in the oven to keep them warm as you finish the remaining fritters. Serve warm with raita.

Called pakora in India, these fritters are dotted with peas and seasoned with warm spices. Pair them with dal (a traditional lentil soup or stew) and naan.

Power Up Your Breakfast

Rise and shine! Fuel your day with these healthy, high-protein breakfast options.



Kale and Chickpea Mini Frittatas

Servings: 12. Prep time: 45 minutes; 15 minutes active.

- 12 large egg whites
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 15-ounce can chickpeas
- 4 leaves kale, chopped finely
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Line a 12-cup muffin pan with paper liners, or grease with shortening or butter, and set aside. (The egg whites will stick if you don't line or grease the pan well.)
2. Whisk the egg whites and salt in a medium bowl; reserve.
3. Drain the chickpeas in a wire strainer and place in a large bowl. Add the kale and tomatoes to the chickpeas. Add the parsley and thyme and mix well, then divide mixture between the muffin cups, placing the items loosely so the egg whites can flow around them. Divide the egg whites between the muffin cups, about ¼ cup of egg per muffin. Tap the pan on the counter to settle the ingredients.
4. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until the eggs are set and firm. Cool on a rack before refrigerating or freezing in an airtight container or plastic freezer bag.

Bake these low-fat frittatas ahead of time and store them in the fridge. They're easy to take along as you run out the door on a busy morning!

Peanut Butter Berry Smoothie Bowl

Servings: 2. Total time: 15 minutes.

- 1 cup plain nonfat Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup peanut butter
- 1 large frozen banana
- 1 cup frozen strawberries
- 2 tablespoons strawberry jam

Toppings

- 2 cups fresh strawberries, sliced
- 1 cup granola
- 2 tablespoons chopped roasted peanuts
- 2 tablespoon chia seeds

Place the yogurt, peanut butter, banana, strawberries and jam in a blender, and secure the lid. Puree until smooth. Divide the smoothie between two low, wide bowls and spread mixture evenly. Arrange the sliced strawberries on each bowl, then garnish with the granola, peanuts and chia seeds. Serve immediately.

A bowl so delicious, it's almost like having ice cream for breakfast — but with nutritious protein and fruit you can feel good about eating.



Reprinted by permission from grocery.coop. Find these and more great power breakfast recipes at grocery.coop.



Avocado and Egg Brown Rice Bowl

Servings: 2. Prep time: 15 minutes.

- 1 1/2 cups leftover cooked brown rice
- 2 teaspoons canola oil or butter
- 2 large eggs
- 1 large avocado

Optional garnishes: Sliced pickled ginger, kimchi, toasted sesame seeds, sautéed greens or leftover cooked vegetables, shredded cheese, hot sauce

1. Reheat rice gently in a small pan with a few drops of water, or in the microwave. Divide the heated rice between two wide bowls. Heat a cast iron or non-stick sauté pan over medium heat for a minute, then add the oil or butter

to the hot pan. Crack each egg into the pan and reduce the heat to medium-low. Cover the pan and let cook for about 2 minutes, until the whites are set and the yolk is jiggly when you shake the pan gently.

2. While the eggs cook, cut the avocado in half lengthwise, and remove the pit. Use a paring knife to slice each avocado half in the shell, then scoop the slices out with a spoon. Fan half of the avocado slices over each bowl of rice, and place a cooked egg on each bowl. Serve with optional garnishes for a hearty breakfast or lunch.

For an even heartier breakfast, add sausage, cubed tofu or bacon crumbles to this whole-grain dish.

Peanut Butter Pancakes

Servings: 4 (12 pancakes). Prep time: 30 minutes.

- 1 cup whole-wheat pastry flour
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 cup creamy peanut butter, divided
- 1/2 cup nonfat Greek yogurt
- 1 1/4 cup milk or almond milk, divided
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 3 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon coconut oil
- Bananas, grapes, strawberries or lightly sweetened cranberries

1. Heat the oven to 200°F, to keep the pancakes warm while you finish cooking.
2. In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt, and whisk to mix well. In a medium bowl, combine the egg, 1/4 cup peanut butter, and yogurt and stir to a smooth paste. Whisk in a cup of the milk gradually, then

- the vanilla, until smooth. Stir the egg mixture into the flour mixture, just until combined.
3. Preheat a griddle or a large non-stick or cast iron skillet over medium heat. When hot, brush lightly with oil. Use a 1/4 cup measure to scoop portions of batter into the pan, leaving space between the rounds of batter. As the pancakes start to form bubbles on top, reduce the heat to medium-low. Cook for about 2 minutes on the first side, until the edges look cooked and the top is bubbled. Carefully flip each cake and cook for about 2 minutes longer. Transfer to a large, heavy platter and place in the oven as you finish the remaining pancakes.
4. Before serving, combine the remaining peanut butter, coconut oil, remaining 1/4 cup of milk and maple syrup and stir over low heat just until warmed and pourable. Stack three pancakes, top with the peanut butter sauce and add sliced or whole fruit.



GARDEN CENTER 2024



SUSTAINABLY-GROWN AND ORGANIC
STARTER VEGGIES, HERBS, FLOWERS,
NATIVE PERENNIALS, HANGING
FLORAL & HERB BASKETS, AND MORE!

Garden Center Opens Monday, May 6

Daily Hours: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

WE'LL BE RECEIVING PLANT DELIVERIES FROM:

Glacial Ridge Growers from Glenwood, MN a family-owned greenhouse business, offers a wide variety of Minnesota hardy perennials, unique annual plants, and certified organic vegetable and herb plants.

Twin Organics from Northfield, MN is owned and operated by twin brothers who provide high quality organic garden plants.

Green Earth Growers from Prior Lake, MN is a small women-owned greenhouse, growing certified naturally grown quality flower and vegetable plants.

Rush Creek Growers from Spring Valley, WI is a women-owned business that uses sustainable growing practices with organic fertilizer, compost tea and beneficial insects to provide us with premium quality bedding plants, herbs and unusual plants.